

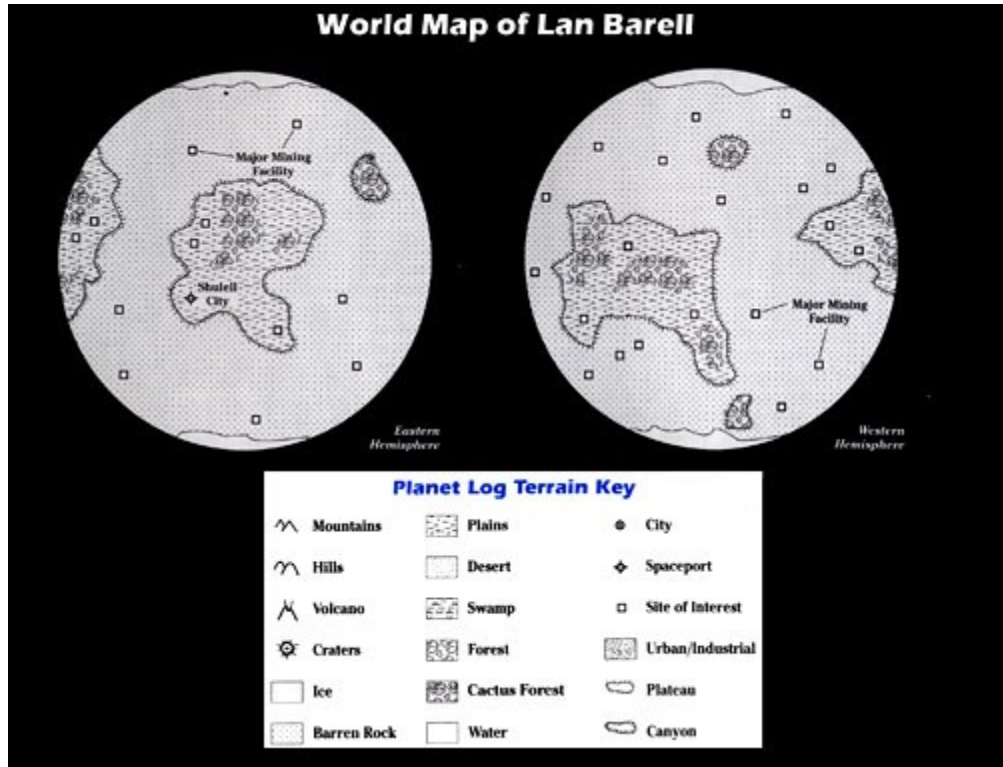
Lan Barell

Planetary Introduction

By Paul Sudlow; Illustrations by Tim Eldred

Three days and five hours beyond the Outer Rim terminus of the Enarc Run lies the remote Lan system. The system consists of five planets orbiting a large, sullen orange star. Life has developed only on the fourth planet of the system, Lan Barell. It remains the only habitable world, though pressurized and underground mining colonies are located on the other planets.

The inner planets of the Lan system are extraordinarily ore-rich. This fact first drew the attention of Old Republic scouts 1,300 years ago, and soon after, Gaminne Group Inc., a large conglomerate then looking to expand its mining operations.



GGI made contact with the Qieg, the insectoid inhabitants of Lan Barell, and bought from them mining rights to the inner planets. The human colonists were granted a charter allowing them to build a city on Lan Barell. Over the centuries, memory of this arrangement has faded, and the present-day human and Qieg cultures have intertwined. Most of the inhabitants regard the planet as jointly owned.

GGI has long since disappeared, but the mining operations -- virtually the only source of income for this credit-poor system -- continue. The various companies working the mines are supervised by the human-Qieg government, itself a conglomeration of these cooperatives.

The rise of the Empire has ironically improved the lot of the system's citizens. When the Empire came to power in the inner systems, Lan Barell discovered it had a resource besides ore to offer the galaxy: extreme isolation and a lax legal system. Lan Barell is now a conveniently out-of-the-way spot for those seeking to avoid the loving attentions of the Empire. Ships now call to off-load refugees, exiles, and smuggled goods nearly as frequently as they arrive to load ore.

When the Empire at last saw fit to claim the system 15 years ago, it came only long enough to impress the locals with the might of the Empire, receive the oaths of fealty from the Lan Barell government, and to assess the value of the mining operations for tax purposes. Then it left, and has bothered the locals little in the meantime.

Lan Barell is a dusty, dry backwater world. Most of the moisture of the atmosphere is locked into the thin polar ice caps. The most inhabitable locations on the planet are on top of three huge plateaus, which serve as continents of sorts. The Lowlands, the lower altitude regions, are uninhabitable wastelands of wind-blasted rock that form the vast oceans separating the plateaus from one another.

The heavy iron content of the rocky soil gives the surface of the planet a faint blue sheen. When combined with the dim reddish light cast by the Lan sun, it makes for a gloomy atmosphere of slightly garish contrasts.

Lan Barell had three moons at one time, though one has been broken down and refined out of existence. The few remaining lumps of moon rock that survived as asteroids now serve as the foundations of ore refining plants which have been built on and around them. The remaining two moons are airless worlds, pitted and scarred by centuries of strip mining.

Lan Barell

Type: Terrestrial

Temperature: Hot

Atmosphere: Type I (breathable)

Hydrosphere: Arid

Gravity: Standard

Terrain: Desert, Mountains, Plateaus

Length of Day: 23 standard hours

Length of Year: 255 local days

Sapient Species: Humans, Qieg (native)

Starport: Standard

Population: 143 million (8 million humans)

Government: Guild (mining companies)

Tech Level: Space

Major Exports: Minerals, ore, and other raw materials

Major Imports: foodstuffs, high tech goods

Points of Interest: Shulell City, the Cacti Forests, the Lowlands

Sytem: Lan

Star: Lan (orange)

System Log:

Lesser Galam (desolate searing rock; 0 moons)

Lan Fellov (barren rock; 1 moon)

Lan Tundi (barren rock; 4 moons)

Lan Barell (hospitable terrestrial; 2 moons) Greater Galam (gas giant; 16 moons)

Summary: Lan Barell is a desert backwater world far removed from the center of Imperial influence. Its inhabitants contribute to the galactic economy by selling large quantities of ore to outlying Mid-Rim systems.

Humans coexist on the planet with the indigenous sentient insects known as the Qieg. The Qieg are diminutive arthropods who live in hives carved out of the huge cacti that are found in the forests of the planet. They are mechanically inclined and are partners with the humans in the mining cooperatives.

The major human-style city is Shulell. The raw materials mined on Lan Barell are gathered here and shipped out through the spaceport.

Barellian Society

The indigenous species of Lan Barell are the Qieg, a diminutive insectoid people who have an uncanny knack with machines and mechanics. The Qieg have hundreds of thousands of colony nests throughout the cacti forests on the plateaus, and also dwell in the settlements built to serve the planet's many mines. Those Qieg who interact with humans regularly wear electronic masks that translate the clickings and movements of their mandibles into human speech.

The local human culture has changed to suit its neighbors as well. The long-time human residents of the Lan system, through long interaction with the Qieg, tend to express emotion with their hands rather than with their faces, in the same way the Qieg employ their antennae. More recent human arrivals to the system, such as merchants and refugees, find this rather unsettling.

Commerce and Government

Just as the system's economy revolves around the extraction and processing of raw materials from the millions of Lan system mines, the economy of Lan Barell centers on selling these goods to Coreward-bound freighters. Ore in both raw and refined forms is a much less expensive commodity in the Outer Rim than elsewhere, but cheap metal always attracts merchants, and Lan ore is shipped to many resource-poor systems in the Mid-Rim.

Lan Barell, and especially Shulell City, serve as the clearinghouse of the system's exports. Though most of the system's ore is not physically transported to Lan Barell, all financial negotiations and exchanges regarding ore must take place in Shulell's center of commerce, the Quilan Hive.

Lan Barell itself has its own network of major mines that are not yet tapped out, and the material extracted from these mines is transported to Shulell by sub-orbital freighters and processed there. Many of these mines are located in the lowlands, and are manned almost entirely by the Qieg. The mines on the plateaus are mined equally by humans and Qieg.

There are also many ranches on the plateaus which herd dingories, the main source of meat for both Qieg and humans. There is no transportation network linking these ranches to one another and to Shulell, beyond the skyhoppers and speeders individual ranchers may own. Three times a year, segments of the packs are driven overland to regional slaughter houses, which have their own landing strips. Dingory meat is tasty, but little is exported to other systems, since most years don't see a significant surplus.

The Lan system is governed by one government, the human-Qieg Guild based in Shulell. The Guild is a consortium of mining cooperatives and companies that has evolved into a stable government over the centuries. The Guild is quite *laissez faire* in its philosophy, and does little to curtail economic transactions. There are no restrictions on weapons, spice, and so on brought to the planet, as long as such activities remain on a relatively small scale. Large-scale operations threatening the security of the government, or inviting gross Imperial intervention, are frowned upon and will be stopped.

The Guild sees its mission primarily to provide its citizens with military and civil protection, and economic stability. The Guild maintains a space navy of one hundred space vessels, all very old, but carefully maintained. The 10 capital ships in the navy are no match for modern battlewagons, but are more than enough to deter pirates looking for unprotected isolated systems to raze. The navy is nearly wholly made up of humans, while the Qieg serve in support roles. This division of labor is a result of the natural tendencies of the two species rather than some sort of inequity.

Most services commonly the responsibility of government, such as medical care and welfare, are the responsibilities of the member companies of the Guild, rather than the Guild itself. This arrangement works on Lan Barell mainly due to the influence of the Qieg culture, which places a great value on caring for one's own.

The Guild has tried several times over the centuries to diversify its exports beyond raw materials, expand its holdings, and attract new settlers, but such attempts have largely failed. Lan Barell has historically remained an unimportant sidetrack off the trade routes established to serve the Outer Rim worlds. The only reason freighters and transports call is to haul away ore. Traditionally, more people leave the Lan system than settle there, explaining the relatively low human population. This trend is reversing with the arrival of more refugees.

Though Lan Barell is in name an Imperial territory, the Imperial presence on the planet is virtually nonexistent. Twice a year, a modest contingency headed by a representative of the sector Moff visits the system to remind its people that they are subjects of the Empire. At other times, the Imperial Embassy, located near the Quilan Hive, hosts a caretaker staff of four diplomats who obviously have greatly displeased their superiors at some point in their careers -- no one volunteers to spend time on Lan Barell. Security is unenthusiastically provided by the Lan Barell government.

The Mining Cooperatives

Mining is the main business of the Lan system, and both humans and Qieg tend to be miners by trade. There are thousands and thousands of mines and ore processing plants on the various planets of the system, and in orbit around them. Processing plants abound on Lan Barell as well.

Culturally, the mining cooperatives are less conventional corporations and more member-driven associations, made up of both humans and Qieg. These strongly familial and very large organizations not only conduct business on behalf of client companies, but also provide insurance, education, health care, and other services to members. They also allow member associations to pool resources and obtain capital assets not ordinarily affordable to individual members, such as the huge processing plants in orbit around Lan Barell.

Like political parties, the mining cooperatives retain members by following through on promises and commitments. Member families are in turn loyal to their cooperatives, and often stay with the same one for generations. There has been little record of abuse on the part of the cooperations themselves. The culture of Lan Barell, and the influence of the Qieg members and directors have insured that the social contract between the groups is not broken.

Shulell City

While there are thousands of mining camps, ranches, homesteads, and towns scattered over the surfaces of the plateaus, there is only one human-style city on Lan Barell -- Shulell City. Shulell boasts the only gathering of humans with a population of over 100,000 on the planet.

The city is a mixture of human-style buildings and Qieg structures. Most of the former are old-fashioned constructions of plasteel and adobe, though an occasional modern building can be seen. These modern buildings are becoming more common with the influx of refugees from Inner-Rim systems. The Qieg buildings, traditional cacti hives, are older still, and date back to the time this area of the continent was covered in cacti.

The spaceport is the only modern facility on the planet that provides comprehensive service to space-going ships, and even has a small shipyard. It is a very busy and dirty area, and huge conveyer hoppers move tons of ore from adjacent processing plants into the yawning bays of monstrous freighters. At all hours of the day, the air is filled with the dull roar of these freighters lifting off and landing. Most of these ships are from and bound for the inner system worlds or the Core. The sub-orbital traffic uses a smaller airport some distance from the spaceport. The airport handles the ore barges from the various domestic mines as well.

Many of the sectors of the city are given over to industry, for the minerals and metals mined around the planet must be transported to and shipped out of Shulell City. These factories and foundries move the raw ore from the airport, refine it, and move it out to the spaceport. These areas are grungy, sooty, and not very appealing to those not entranced by the smelting industry. Other areas of town are more mundane, and include residential and commercial districts.

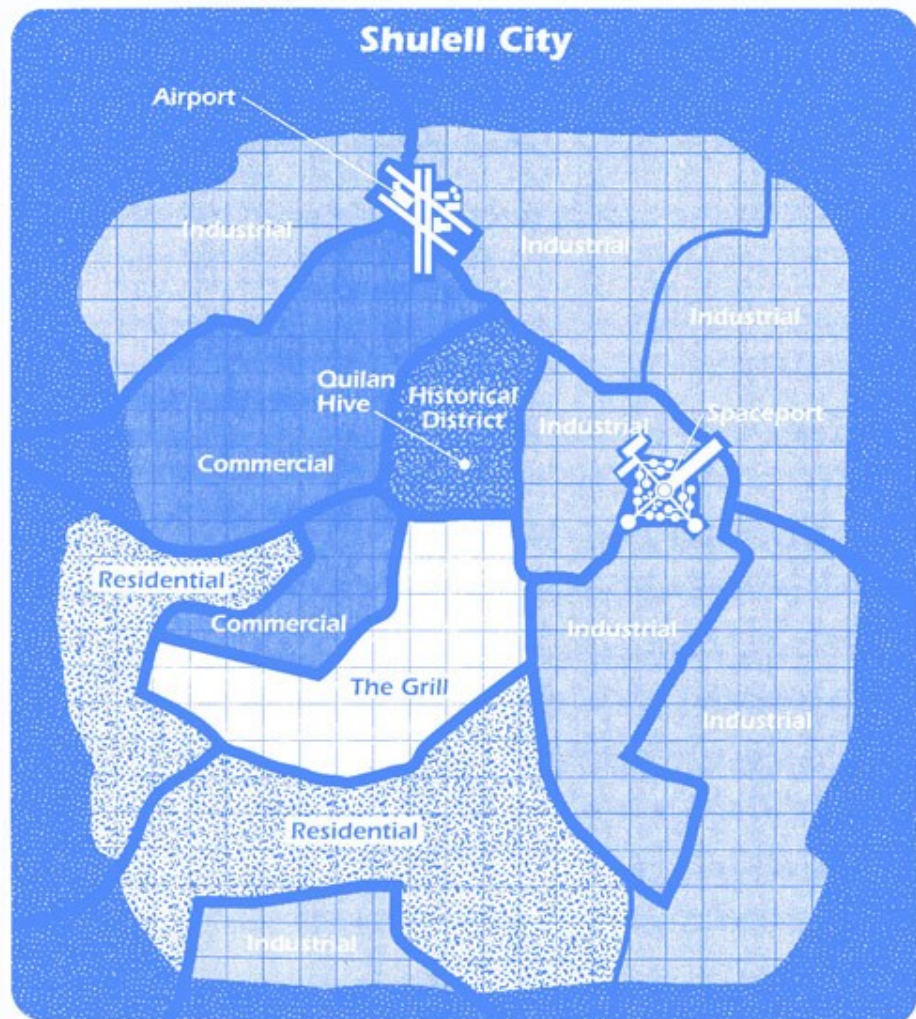
A few spots in Shulell likely to be of more interest to freighter captains and Rebel agents are covered below in more detail, including the historical downtown district where the commerce exchange is located, and The Grill, an area of town where business even the tolerant Barellian government would likely frown upon is conducted.

Quilan Hive

When humans first came to Lan Barell, they found the Qieg living at a feudal technological level. The insects lived in the interiors of the huge cacti of the plateaus, which were fortified with ceramic plates and iron sheeting. One of the greatest of these natural citadels was the Quilan Hive. Actually a network of nests tied together by huge stone walls rather than a single cactus, the 5,000 year-old Quilan Hive housed over 100,000 Qieg at one point in its history.

Today the Hive serves as the financial and commercial center of the Lan system. Areas have been enlarged to admit humans. It now is the home of government agencies, mining cooperative headquarters, and trading companies; 30,000 Qieg live and work in the complex, together with over 2,000 humans.

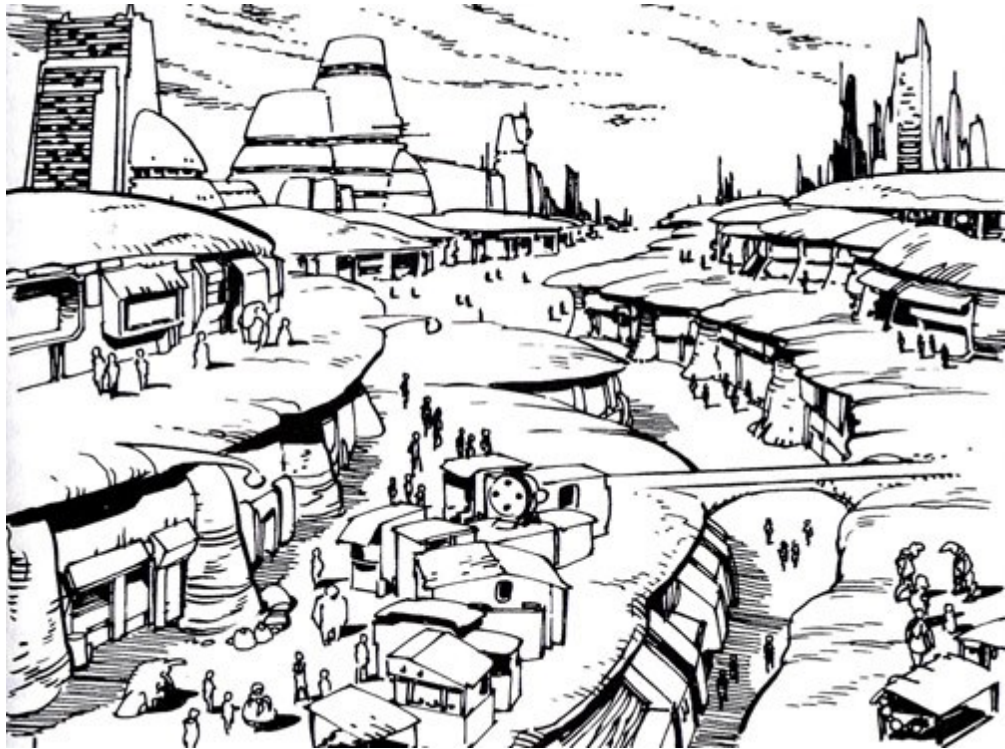
A busy trade floor now exists in the ancient council chamber in the heart of the nest where hive policy was once debated. Here cooperative representatives and merchants meet to negotiate terms of trade, and jointly determine the destination of the system's ore.



Outsiders desiring to get a contract shipping ore Coreward are advised to hire one of the freelance introducers who maintain offices in the Quilan district. Negotiating with human Barellians directly can be very difficult (humans do most of the negotiating with offworld traders). They aren't quite as wily and mercenary as the Corellians, but their habit of expressing emotion in ways other humans cannot read makes them fine bargainers nonetheless (they are also formidable sabacc players). Though Lan ore cannot command a premium price, the cooperative dealers are determined to sell it as dearly as possible, and are quite good at doing so.

The introducers are also very adept at navigating the intricate bureaucratic and cultural mazes that riddle the Hive, and can produce the required permits and visas in half the time it would take an outsider to obtain them. Of course, there are many introducers who are less capable than they present themselves to be.

Physically, the interior of the hive is spacious and well lit in the human sectors, and cramped and claustrophobic in the Qieg areas. The layout does not correspond with human sensibilities, and the corridors and rooms weave and wind in all



directions with no apparent reason. Those unfamiliar with the layout of Qieg hives can become lost quickly unless they either put a few credits in one of the page droids that are programmed to serve as guides, or come in the company of a native Barellian of either species.

Though there are no windows in the complex, corridors and chambers are filled with colorful plants that are rooted in the fiber of the walls and floors, and small streams run through some chambers near the outer walls of the Hive. The juxtaposition of such naturalistic features with computer terminals, droids, electrical piping, and other modern conveniences is slightly jarring to those accustomed to more sterile surroundings.

To humans, the Hive has a faintly pleasing scent of spice about it. To mammals with a more developed sense of smell (such as Wookiees), the odor is maddening.

The Grill

The government's *laissez faire* approach to law enforcement serves as an irresistible beacon drawing all sorts of men, women, and beings given to participating in enterprises the Empire would frown upon. Those who are wanted by the Empire, for whatever reason, often find themselves in the relatively safe neighborhood of the Grill, a wild mixture of adobe slums, gleaming business buildings, quiet shady plazas, and cacti gardens in an older section of Shulell.

The shops and markets of the Grill offer a veritable plethora of goods and services, few of them legal back in the real Empire. The black market is very developed, and everything from illegally enhanced hyperdrive engines to new Imperial citizenship IDs can be had, for the right price.

The Grill is a bustling place, given to impromptu bazaars and markets. It is common to see representatives of over 50 species at once on the narrow streets, and alien music and sounds assail the ears from every side. At any given time of the day, one is likely to witness the celebration of a festival or holiday from one of a hundred worlds. Religious leaders wail out prayers and sermons to the faithful on every corner and from windows above the street.

Many of the aliens seen here are from worlds enslaved by the Empire. There are ethnic communities of varying sizes in the Grill. A few Wookiee clans made it this far out and run a series of tech-related businesses, including a small dockyard at the spaceport that repairs and rebuilds spacecraft engines, and a few Grill shops specializing in computers and droids. These Wookiees may be a surprising sight to those used to the shaggy-haired individuals they may have seen elsewhere -- they shear their fur short, to better tolerate the oppressive heat of Lan Barell.

Herglics and Elomin can also be seen in great numbers. The latter can offer enterprising merchants a great deal on transparisteel purchased in bulk. No one knows where they get it exactly, but many suspect a few Imperial shipments of Lommite from Elom never arrive at their scheduled destinations.

One of the largest communities of "illegals" is not a species, but a political class. The hunted people who live here are Old Republic politicians, business leaders, and the fragments of governments-in-exile. Many managed to bring with them formidable assets, which allow them to live in luxury in secluded villas surrounded by bodyguards. Many more are less fortunate, and some who once commanded millions of credits now command small bars or pawnshops. Such are the fortunes of war.

Though one would expect such a place as the Grill to be filled with low-lives, grifters, and pirates, criminals do not thrive in this environment. To be sure, the criminal element has a distinct presence in the neighborhood, but most people live more productive lives, and nearly everyone travels armed. Moreover, most of the people carrying weapons know how to use them, and are willing to stick up for one another. Citizens of the Grill frown upon muggings, protection rackets, and other crimes that often plague refugee communities. The street justice of the Grill is swift and often final. The Wookiees of the neighborhood, feeling honor-bound to protect fellow refugees and customers, are especially dedicated vigilantes. For obvious reasons, bounty hunters are especially unwelcome in the Grill, and those stalking their quarry into the Grill must be extremely circumspect.

There is a small Rebel cell on Lan Barell that is based in the Grill, but it is limited in its actions. It maintains a soup kitchen in the center of the Grill, and has a hand in a number of smuggling operations. The cell also keeps an eye out for refugees of value to the Alliance who can be persuaded to uproot their lives again and move their families to a Rebel safe world.

But the cell can do little more. Few of the refugees are eager to contribute to a cause that would bring the attentions of the Empire on them again, now that they feel safe. The denizens of the Grill look with approval at the Rebellion and its crusade, but do not want the war brought to their neighborhood.

Another barrier is the Lan Barellian government. Though the government largely turns a blind eye to goings on in the Grill, it will not allow the presence of an active Rebel enclave. Left to itself, a Rebel movement would grow in power and influence until the day came that Star Destroyers filled the skies of Lan Barell. This is unacceptable, and the government has let the Rebel cell know this in no uncertain terms. Save for a few firebrands, the cell members reluctantly concur.

Carmelle

Carmelle is a small settlement about 20 kilometers away from Shulell, where the local ranchers maintain stockyards and slaughter houses. Carmelle is the regional processing town for several large ranches in the area, and the ranchers and their dingory packs descend upon the town periodically.

The dingories are large hairless canines that are the ancient foes of the Qieg. Dingories travel in packs of 20-50 adults and young, and primarily subsist on the large insects and slugs found in the cacti forests. However, a dingory will frenzy if it catches the scent of a Qieg, and Qieg have a very great ancestral fear of these beasts. Humans can domesticate dingories, but only as long as there are no Qieg within a kilometer or so. Dingories are a basic staple of the Qieg and human diet, and dingory ranches are a common sight in the plateau interiors.

Live dingories are under no circumstance brought into Shulell proper, except when sealed in habitats bound directly to the spaceport, since neither they nor Qieg enjoy face-to-face encounters.

The Cacti Forests & Lowlands



At one time, sprawling cacti forests covered the plateaus. However, due to millennia of Qieg deforestation and centuries of mining and land clearing for dingory packs, much of the land on the plateaus became parched and unable to support life. Thanks to human bioengineering science, a few hardy species of grasses were manufactured which would take root in the dry soil and prevent wholesale erosion on a massive scale. After two centuries of an aggressive seeding program, a thick growth of grass covers the plains. Native flora and fauna are returning to the plains slowly.

However, a great deal of the original cacti forests remain, and millions of Qieg still live in hives carved out from the giant cacti there. These hives are fortified with ceramic plates and plasteel, and protected by a variety of traditional and modern weapons. There are some hives deep within the forests that still live in a state of low technology. These are the Qiernal, and humans and humanoid mammals are not advised to travel into Qiernal territories. These Qieg do not approve of aliens, and though violence is relatively uncommon, people have disappeared.

The forests are also the natural stomping grounds of the dingory packs. These aggressive predator mammals consider Qieg a great delicacy. They are drawn to Qieg settlements, and frenzy when they catch the scent of a Qieg.

The feeling is mutual. Qieg hate the dingories, and both humans and Qieg find dingory flesh quite tasty. At one point, soon after humans arrived on the planet and introduced the Qieg to blasters, the dingories were hunted to the brink of extinction. The dingory population is still controlled in the settled areas of the forests, but has once again risen to ferocious levels in the wilder areas.

The lowlands are harsh realms ruled by ferocious sandstorms, volcanoes, and frequent earthquakes. Volcanic ash and other contaminants make the atmosphere of the lowlands unbreathable by humans, though the Qieg are able to survive in the harsh environment.

The ecology of the lowlands is simple but quite efficient. Most lifeforms are microscopic, but small insects and reptiles abound as well.

The Qieg do not find life in the lowlands comfortable, and there is little in the way of food. However, there are many mines in the lowlands, and surrounding each is a small settlement where the Qieg miners live. Sealed buildings also allow humans to live and work in the lowlands, but the economics of the situation result in largely Qieg populations.

The Qieg have a passage to adulthood rite that involves trekking alone into the lowlands to shrines maintained there by the monks of the Qieg religion. These aesthetes are the only Qieg who live full-time in the lowlands.

The Qieg

The Qieg are small, insectoid humanoids, which are about a meter tall when standing upright. Their bodies have three segments, a head, upper abdomen, and lower abdomen. The Qieg have six limbs, two arms and four legs. The feet on the first set of legs are joined so they may also be used as hands if needed. There are several races of Qieg, some having rusty red shells, while others have yellow, light blue, and orange shells. Males and females are very similar in size and appearance and, unlike many other sentient insect species, have relatively equal roles to play in their societies. All females lay eggs, which are fertilized by many males.

There is no family unit -- children are raised communally. Loyalty to the hive, however, is deeply ingrained in each Qieg, and the



present Barellian system of industrial cooperatives owes a lot to the Qieg culture. Indeed, the Qieg use the word "hive" to describe both their home nests and the cooperative in which they are a member.

Qieg culture de-emphasizes the importance of the individual and emphasizes racial and tribal pride. The various races of Qieg get along fine, though there is definitely a feeling of competition between them. The Qieg religion is one of predestination and acceptance of the status quo.

Qieg are very adept at solving mechanical and technical problems. Though they were in a feudal tech state when humans first came to the Lan system, they had already developed primitive electronics and had a complex mining infrastructure already in place. They quickly absorbed the new technologies the humans brought with them, and began to upgrade their economy to more closely approximate the galactic standard.

The Qieg communicate with one another in a series of clicks, chirps, and mandible motions, and by waving their antennae about in certain patterns. Their vocal cords can approximate the binary language used by some droids, and some Qieg can speak droid binary. Those Qieg dealing regularly with humans wear electronic masks that reproduce the vocal ranges of the human voice box. Many Qieg live in the mining towns and in Shulell, but most of the Qieg live in the forests, in nests fashioned from hollowed-out cacti.

The Qiemal

When humans first arrived on Lan Barell, there were a number of unfortunate first contacts, a result of the Qieg equating mammal with killer (from living in fear of the dingories for eons). Humans and Qieg soon resolved their differences and settled into an equitable arrangement. However, for some Qieg, the bad first impression the settlers made on them did not improve. These Qieg soon became known as the Qiemal, which means First Nest in the Qieg language.

The Qiemal are a small but militant group that works to get offworlders off the planet for good. They are not usually violent, but do occasionally strain interspecies relations when disputes flare up. The Qiemal have chapters and organizations in Shulell and other settlements in which humans live, but most of them live in the forests, where they don't have to look at aliens.

The most predominant Qiemal sect maintains the level of technology of pre-human settlement days, living in hives that look like historical relics. They are self-sufficient, and maintain that when the ore runs out, the Qieg of the cities and factories will have no more money to buy their fancy toy servants and flying ships, and no more money to buy food they have forgotten how to raise. When this day comes, only the forest Qieg who faithfully kept to the old ways will survive.

So goes the litany. Endless political fights rage between the city and forest Qiemal, and with the rest of the Qieg, which occasionally approach a state of religious warfare. Human Barellians wisely opt to stay out of the debate.

This first appeared as a feature article in Star Wars Adventure Journal #1, published in 1994 by West End Games.